

Deployed staffers' service gives 'satisfaction of making a difference'

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The sweat of fear

Stuttgart Area Red Cross Station Manager Kathleen Butler, who has been with the Red Cross for over 22 years, first deployed during Operation Desert Storm.

During her first deployment, Butler heard a chemical siren alarm, which signified an imminent chemical attack.

As she fumbled to put on her chemical suit and gas mask, the mask began to slide slightly down her face.

"I now know what the sweat of fear is," Butler said, recalling the incident. "As I was changing, something inside of me changed. It was a fear most Americans will never have to feel."

I take pride in the fact that I'm part of something ... I can't save the world, but I can do something. I'm living my life knowing that I have satisfaction in what I do, and I am making a difference, and that is cool," she said.

Since Desert Storm, Butler has been deployed to Bosnia, Hungary and Kosovo, and may deploy to Iraq later this year.

Her daughter Samantha Wudel, Red Cross assistant station manager from Fort Hood, Texas, is currently on her first deployment—in Tikrit, Iraq.

"Most Red Cross people are nurturers," Butler said. "It'll be interesting to see how hooked [Wudel] gets. It's contagious."

Why the Red Cross?

The Red Cross "sends messages quickly, anywhere in the world, including ships at sea, embassies and isolated military units," according to information on the agency's Web site (www.redcross.org).

Although it may seem as if the military should be able to do this job itself, "the majority of family members needing assistance live in civilian communities far removed from military installations and many do not know how to reach a family member stationed in the military," according to the Red Cross.

Furthermore, military leaders do not have the capacity to "verify and validate" family emergencies. Thus, they turn to the Red Cross.

According to the Web site, 95 percent of all family emergencies involve the death or severe illness of a service member's close relative.

A history of deployments

Since Clara Barton founded the Red Cross in 1881, employees of the organization have been present in all wars and conflicts in which there was U.S. involvement, including the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Vietnam, Operations Desert Shield and Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In addition, Red Cross employees over the years have served in Rwanda, Haiti, Croatia, Hungary and Bosnia.

More than 100 Red Cross employees continue to serve in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mobile Permanent Staff employees, like Butler and Magnuson, are assigned to – and deploy alongside – military units.

"[The military] sees us as a vital part of their deployment team," Butler said, "They make sure we're as safe as we can be."

Most overseas Red Cross deployments last about four months, and the number of troops determines how many Red Cross personnel are deployed, she said.

As the troops reduce in size, so does the Red Cross presence. "Once it starts to get comfortable," Butler said, "it's time for us to go."



courtesy Red Cross

It's not always work, work, work: The Red Cross' Kathleen Butler brings a bit of the Christmas spirit to a deployed service member.

*I can't save the world, but
I can do something.
I'm living my life knowing
I am making a difference.*

Kathleen Butler

Stuttgart Area Red Cross

How the system works

When the Red Cross receives a message, servicing starts within the hour, Butler said.

Once the message has been "verified and validated," she said, transmitting it could take anywhere from a few hours to a few days, depending on where the service member is at the time.

Once the message has been relayed successfully (either to the service member or his or her commander), the Red Cross's involvement is complete.

"The Red Cross is the messenger," Butler said, "Leave depends on the command."

Emergency leave is not granted to a service member automatically; it is the decision of the commander and may depend on the mission, Butler said.

For more information visit www.redcross.org or call the Stuttgart Area Red Cross at 431-2818/civ. 07031-15-818.

German state provides travel and tourism vouchers to returning service members

Installation Management Agency,
Europe Region,
Public Affairs Office Release

Service members who are returning to home stations in Baden-Württemberg on "R&R" – or who are redeploying from Iraq – can benefit from a gift from German state officials

The Baden-Württemberg Finance Ministry has provided 150 free passes for U.S. service members to one of the state-owned cultural monuments in the following areas:

- Bad Urach – Castle
- Bruchsal – Castle
- Dilsberg – Castle Ruin and Tunnel
- Heidelberg – Castle
- Kirchheim/Teck – Castle
- Lauchheim – Kapfenburg
- Ludwigsburg – Castle
- Ludwigsburg – Castle "Favorite"
- Mannheim – Castle
- Maulbronn – Monastery
- Ochsenhausen – Monastery
- Rastatt – Castle
- Rastatt-Förch – Castle "Favorite"
- Schwetzingen – Castle and Garden
- Stuttgart – Castle "Solitude"
- Stuttgart-Rotenberg – Burial Vault Chapel
- Singen – Hohentwiel Ruin
- Tettngang – New Castle
- Tübingen-Bebenhausen – Castle
- Tübingen-Bebenhausen – Monastery
- Weikersheim – Castle

Service members need only present the voucher at the ticket offices of the sites listed.

In addition to the travel vouchers, the state is also providing vouchers for one day of free travel on public transportation within Baden-Württemberg.

The free passes have been distributed to rear detachment commanders in the 6th Area Support Group, the 26th ASG in Heidelberg and the 293rd Base Support Battalion in Mannheim.

Service members who use the free passes are encouraged to provide feedback by e-mailing comments to webimaeur@ima-e.army.mil.

Upcoming Stuttgart-Area American Red Cross classes

Volunteer Orientation: March 2, 1 to 3 p.m., and March 16, 10 a.m. to noon. Cost: free.

Adult CPR/AED with First Aid: March 22 and 24, 6 to 9:30 p.m. Cost: \$30.

Super Babysitting training: March 15, 17, 22 and 24, 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Cost: \$35.

Infant and Child CPR: March 15 and 17, 6 to 9:30 p.m. Cost: \$30.

To sign up for a class, call the Red Cross at 431-2818/civ. 07031-15-818.

